



Jackson Purchase Historical  
Society

---

Volume 11 | Number 1

Article 8

---

6-1983

## TVA Celebrates Its Fiftieth Birthday

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/jphs>



Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

(1983) "TVA Celebrates Its Fiftieth Birthday," *Jackson Purchase Historical Society*: Vol. 11 : No. 1 , Article 8.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/jphs/vol11/iss1/8>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Murray State's Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Jackson Purchase Historical Society by an authorized editor of Murray State's Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [msu.digitalcommons@murraystate.edu](mailto:msu.digitalcommons@murraystate.edu).

# TVA CELEBRATES ITS FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY

L. Darryl Armstrong

President Franklin D. Roosevelt's message to the Congress on April 10, 1933, called for the creation of an agency "charged with the broadest duty of planning for the proper use, conservation, and development of the natural resources of the Tennessee River drainage basin and its adjoining territory for the general social and economic welfare of the nation."

Roosevelt said that development of the Tennessee River, "if envisioned in its entirety, transcends mere power development; it enters the wide fields of flood control, soil erosion, reforestation, elimination from agricultural use of marginal farm lands, and distribution and diversification of industry."

The fifty-year history focuses on one clear conclusion: the original purpose of the Tennessee Valley Authority was economic development in the broadest sense.

It was to involve electric power, fertilizer development, river transportation, and more, welded and unified into a whole and directed toward improving the quality of life for the people in the seven-state Tennessee Valley.

In observance of the Fiftieth Anniversary of TVA, the "Valley Adventure" barges, viewed by more than one million people at the 1982 World's Fair, will tour the Tennessee Valley this spring, summer, and fall.

The barges began their river trip in April in Knoxville, and will travel the Tennessee, Cumberland and Mississippi Rivers, a journey of 1300 miles, encompassing twenty-three community stops.

From Civil War battle re-enactments to energy fairs, from street dances and old-time socials to parades and special community days of observance, the host communities throughout the Tennessee Valley are extending their hands and hearts in friendship to make the Fiftieth Anniversary of TVA a very special activity.

The "Valley Adventure" is a lively and colorful exhibit on two river barges. When you step aboard you can stroll through the past fifty years of TVA's efforts to improve the quality of life in the Tennessee Valley.

In the Kentucky District, visitors can view these exhibits at Grand Rivers, August 24-28; at Paducah, September 22-26; and at Hickman, September 30 through October 4.

From the radio address of Franklin Roosevelt, bringing hope to a despondent nation during the Depression, to the challenges of playing modern day computer games which force the making of quick decisions on power demands, the exhibits are informative and educational.

But, perhaps, even more important is the attitude expressed by the host communities. The extra efforts being displayed by these communities

guarantees the success of the celebrations. In Grand Rivers, Kentucky, the local committee is working diligently to provide a full five-day festival, which not only recognizes TVA's fiftieth anniversary, but also the twentieth anniversary of the Land Between the Lakes as well.

The positive approaches by the cities of Paducah and Hickman and the interest and enthusiasm being generated compounds daily. These communities are planning arts and crafts festivals, special field trips for their schools, and special community activities.

In this time of reflection for an agency fifty years old, it is especially rewarding to see former TVA employees coming to these communities to assist in manning the exhibits. One TVA retiree acknowledged the feelings of many when he noted, "Most of our people were with TVA thirty or forty years. They have knowledge about TVA you couldn't buy."

Some retirees are driving hundreds of miles to work on the barges. Why? Volunteer coordinator Bayard Erskine says, "Because TVA was more than a paycheck to them . . . They really have dedication to TVA, because times were so hard when the Agency came along and gave them a job which improved their lifestyles. They—we—are grateful and I for one want to pay TVA back."

In addition to the special community activities, TVA's Land Between the Lakes will be holding special activities throughout the summer and fall celebrating its birthday.

Land Between the Lakes was established in 1963 under Presidential executive order as a national demonstration in outdoor recreation and environmental education. Located in Western Kentucky and Tennessee, more than one and one-half million people annually visit this haven for boaters, campers, hikers, and fishermen.

Visitors to Land Between the Lakes and to TVA's "Valley Adventure" on the barges will be able to trace the origin and history of TVA as it has fostered and will continue to do, in partnership with the people of the Tennessee Valley, the continuing economic development of this region.

---

**Editor's Note:** District Administrator Armstrong appends additional information: We would like to remind all members of the Jackson Purchase Historical Society that if there is any need for assistance or information, we are but a telephone call from you. It is our desire, as the field representative for the Board of Directors of TVA and the Office of the General Manager, to provide all of you, who are our consumers as well as citizens of the Valley, with assistance and information in a timely manner. Specific information on the Fiftieth Anniversary, or any other pertinent matter, can be obtained by contacting the Kentucky District Administrator's office, 115 Hammond Plaza, Hopkinsville, Ky. 42240, or by phone (502) 885-3398.